



PAA position paper on US Senate proposals for revising ESEA 2/23/15

Senate ESEA proposals

PAA's position

Freeze funding at “sequester” levels; end “**Maintenance of Effort**” provision requiring states and districts to fund schools at least at current levels.

Oppose: Schools and teachers in the neediest communities must not be asked to do more with less. We are concerned that there are not enough checks in place to keep ESEA funds from being used as budget balancers rather than the supplemental funds needed to address the effects of poverty and discrimination.

Allow **grade span testing**.

Support: No Child Left Behind started the current test mania by requiring annual testing - and a revised ESEA can help end it. We support the proposal that ESEA require **testing only once at each grade span**. We further support an end to high stakes testing and even stronger support for real multiple measures using varied assessments, projects and performances over time.

Expand funding for **charter schools** using the rhetoric of “parental choice.”

Oppose: The choice of most parents is a **high-quality neighborhood school**. Charter school quality has been disappointing to say the least – we oppose using scarce education funds to open more charters, enrich charter management companies, and create new bureaucracies to approve charters over the objections of local school boards.

End requirements from RTTT and other programs that specified intervention models and required use of student test scores to evaluate teachers.

Support: Race to the Top's overly-prescriptive intervention models – including school closure and privatization by firing staff and closing schools, turning them over to charter or other private management -- did not prove to be a recipe for school improvement. Requiring the use of student test scores as significant parts of teacher evaluation also went against research and best practices.

Provide Title I fund “**portability**.”

Oppose: We support the fundamental purpose of Title I - **to provide extra resources to schools serving low-income students**. Title I “portability” - having funds “follow the child” - may pave the way for voucher programs, which show little evidence of success, or redirect funds away from schools in poor neighborhoods toward more affluent ones.

Remove **95% testing participation** requirement.

Support: PAA also supports a parent's **right to opt their children out** of any standardized testing without consequences.

Remove the requirement that teachers be **highly qualified**, and assurances that students in high-poverty schools have equal access to qualified teachers.

Oppose: Parents care about teacher qualifications, and research shows that, as with dentists or surgeons, teacher preparation and certification matter. Six-week “teacher camps” are not adequate substitutes for real teacher preparation.

PAA is a national network of parents actively supporting public schools.

Please see our full position paper on a new ESEA here: <http://tinyurl.com/mel9ceq>

Visit us at www.parentsacrossamerica.org